Frequently Asked Questions About Drinking Water

Is my tap water tested?

Chesterfield County's state-certified water quality laboratory tests the water from tap water samples collected throughout the county daily. The Addison-Evans Water Production and Laboratory Facility performs an average of 58,000 tests per year. Our consistent, high-quality water meets or exceeds all applicable federal, state and county requirements. We publish an annual Water Quality Report that may answer many of your questions. Please click on the following link to view the **Water Quality Report**.

Why does my tap water taste like chlorine?

Chlorine, in the form of chloramine, is added to the water at the treatment plant to disinfect the water and ensure the water stays free of harmful bacteria in the miles of pipelines to your residence. The concentration range depends on where you reside relative to the treatment plant and the time of year. The very low, safe and effective chlorine levels in the water range from about 1.0 to 4.0 parts per million, or ppm.

What is the pH of my water?

The natural water's pH can vary, so the pH or acidity of the water is controlled at the treatment plant using lime to make sure that corrosion control treatment works properly and the water coming out of your tap is consistent. The pH in our distribution system ranges from 7.0 to 8.0 pH units, which is in the neutral range.

What is the hardness of my water?

Hardness is determined by the concentrations of dissolved calcium and magnesium carbonates naturally occurring in the water. Hardness is measured by the lab in milligrams per liter, or mg/L, which is equivalent to parts per million, or ppm. Our naturally soft water is in the range of 40 to 70 ppm, which is 2.0 to 4.0 grains per gallon.

What is the pinkish residue on my bathroom fixtures?

A pinkish film or residue is most likely an airborne bacterium called *Serratia marcescens*. These bacteria are not present in the water supply. They are naturally present in the environment and may appear during new construction or remodeling work due to the dust and dirt stirred up by these activities. They thrive on moisture, dust and phosphates. The best way to control these bacteria is to clean the effected surfaces with bleach, or a cleanser containing bleach, and keep the area as dry as possible.

Why does my water look cloudy or white?

The cloudy water is most likely caused by tiny air bubbles in the water similar to the bubbles in carbonated soft drinks. After a while, the bubbles rise to the top and escape into the air. This type of cloudiness occurs most often in the winter when the relatively cold water leaves the treatment system and travels through pipes in the cold ground to your warmer home. When you open your tap, the water is no longer trapped inside the pipes, and the oxygen immediately begins to escape or bubble to the surface. The technical term for this naturally occurring phenomenon is "off gassing." The air bubbles are harmless, do not affect water quality, and will go away on their own.

The aerators on our faucets are clogged with white particles. What is it?

These particles are most likely pieces of plastic from the hot water tank. There is a plastic part called the dip tube (cold water inlet tube) which deteriorates or fragments over time. These fragments flow out of the tank, through the hot water outlet and throughout a home or building's plumbing, clogging aerators and showerheads. The fragments will float in a glass of water. This is not a water quality issue. A new dip tube may have to be installed or the hot water tank replaced. In some water supplies with hard water, white particles could be calcium carbonate deposits. These deposits are not an issue with Chesterfield County's naturally soft water.

Why does the water in my bathroom sink smell like rotten eggs?

This common situation is most likely due to an actual drain odor. The rotten egg, sewer or sulfur smell, which is usually stronger in the morning and confined to a particular location, is a typical signs of drain odor coming from the u-shaped trap under the sink. As soon as the hot or cold water is turned on, the air-water interface in the trap is displaced and the odors are immediately released. The odor goes away when the water is run, but returns later. To remedy this situation, carefully pour one cup of bleach down the affected drain and wait 15 to 20 minutes without using the water. Then, flush thoroughly with cold water. This treatment can be repeated, as needed.